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AUTHOR Laosa, Luis M.
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ABSTRACT

In order to develop an adequate multicultural competency based teacher education (CBTE) program, culturally-determined individual learner characteristics must be delineated and the nature of interactions between specific teacher behaviors and pupil characteristics must be investigated, in order to determine which set of teacher behaviors applied to a child with specified characteristics produce the desired pupil outcomes. In order to avoid stifling or rigidifying cultural evolution, models of CBTE programs must be developed which are based on a conceptualization of culture that is not statis, but continually evolving. Models of multicultural CBTE programs must show a sensitivity to the possibility that CBTE is antithetical to the values of certain cultural-linguistic groups in the United States. For instance, some individuals, given a certain set of sociocultural premises, may not find the potential emphasis of CBTE on individual rather than group study compatible with their relational style. Multicultural teacher competencies should be postulated as hypotheses to be tested empirically in specific situations. These hypotheses should be based on previous research findings, conventional wisdom, promising practices, existing theories of learning and human development, and expressed community needs. (HMD)

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Toward a Research Model of Multicultural Competency-Based Teacher Education*

Luis M. Laosa

University of California at Los Angeles

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Toward a Research Model of Multicultural Competency-Based Teacher Education

Luis M. Laosa
University of California at Los Angeles

Two movements of seemingly great potential are becoming increasingly visible in American education today. These are, (1) a trend toward cultural pluralism and multicultural bilingual education; and (2) a trend toward competency-based approaches to teacher education. Although neither of these two movements is completely ne[illegible]ducation--historical antecedents may be traced fo[illegible]-recent developments and growing pressures from an increasingly wide variety of sources suggest that both concepts will play major roles in future American education. The present paper attempts to integrate these two concepts--multicultural education and competency-based teacher education--and to develop a viable research model of multicultural competency-based teacher education.

Cultural Pluralism and Multicultural Education

What is cultural pluralism? And what is meant by multicultural education? American society is composed of a wide variety of cultural and ideological communities, each with its own characteristic life style, value system, and

all the other components that make up what we call "culture." In societies like the United States, societies which themselves comprise multiple cultural groups, each of these subgroups may be said to constitute a "subculture."

Whereas a "melting pot" view of American society called for the amalgamation of all subcultures into a new and superior culture, it has become increasingly apparent that such a model may not provide a healthy outcome for certain groups. It now seems clear that an amalgamation model, when directed by a dominant class, leads to the melting away of the other subcultures and to the preponderance of one group over the others. In the U.S., the melting pot model has favored the White Anglo Saxon Protestant (WASP) group and has resulted in the neglect--and even in some cases in the oppression--of certain "culturally different" groups.

What is the alternative to a culturally homogeneous, Anglo-conformist society? The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) recently has adopted a "No One Model American" policy statement which reflects the increasing tendency toward a positive recognition of cultural and linguistic differneces, and to viewing cultural variability as a societal asset. In this light, cultural pluralism rejects both assimilation and separatism as ultimate goals, and it affirms the understanding and appreciation of differences that exist among the nation's citizens.

As a corollary to the above, multicultural education is "education which values cultural pluralism." And multicultural education. . . affirms that schools should be oriented toward the cultural enrichment of all children and youth through programs rooted in the preservation and extension of cultural alternatives (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1973). As stated by the AACTE, education for cultural pluralism is seen to include four major thrusts: (1) the teaching of values which support cultural diversity and individual uniqueness; (2) the encouragement of the qualitative expansion of existing ethnic cultures and their incorporation into the mainstream of American socioeconomic and political life; (3) the support in explorations in alternative and emerging life styles; and (4) the encouragement of multiculturalism, multilingualism, and multidialectism.

Competency Based Teacher Education

What is Competency Based Teacher Education (CBTE)? Whereas traditional teacher education programs generally have as criteria for successful termination the completion of a specified number of courses and practicum activities, competency based teacher education follows a different principle. In CBTE, criteria of what should make a successful teacher are generally stated in terms of specified measurable acts, and successful completion rests upon evidence that the

prospective teacher can perform these criterion acts. As such, CBTE generally has a more individualized focus than traditional teacher education programs, since the emphasis in CBTE is upon exit rather than upon entrance requirements.

In terms of competency based criteria, what is a professional teacher in the context of multicultural education? To give a perfectly logical definition, a professional teacher in the context of multicultural competency based teacher education is one who is able to provide evidence that she/he can perform the acts which have been specified in advance as constituting successful multicultural teaching. Though technically sound, such a definition raises a host of rather serious questions.

Is multicultural education a socially desirable goal? What are the implications of multicultural education from a wide societal perspective? Is multicultural education feasible with present resources? Is there a sufficiently strong and long-range societal commitment to cultural pluralism which would make multicultural education feasible? Is multicultural education a potentially positive activity toward the cultural, social, economic, and political liberation of heretofore oppressed minorities? Would CBTE in multicultural education, if institutionalized, stifle or rigidify cultural evolution? Are the philosophical underpinnings of CBTE antithetical to the sociocultural values of

certain minority groups? What kinds of outcomes should we strive to develop in children? How will these be assessed? Once the desired pupil outcomes are determined, how do we know which teacher competencies will facilitate particular pupil outcomes?

In developing a CBTE model for multicultural education one must deal with the above questions. Certain of these issues may be dealt with rationally,* that is, following an analysis based solely on reason and experience. Still others, however, necessitate an empirical approach.

A CBTE model that purports to be adequate, then, must (1) have a sound rational basis, i.e., a coherent theory or at least follow a systematic conceptual framework; and (2) provide a mechanism for ongoing (a) empirical validation of the underlying assumptions; (b) provisions to answer empirically specific questions that arise during the process of program development and implementation; and (c) testing of hypotheses that would not only deal with (a) and (b) above but would in addition further the scientific body of knowledge in this emerging field.

Deriving Conclusions Rationally

Following the earlier discussion on cultural pluralism, we proceed from the assumption that multicultural education is a socially desirable goal, since it is projected to

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*A rational approach may be contrasted with an empirical one, which relies on experimentation and systematic observation.

facilitate the societal goal of cultural pluralism.

The question of availability of resources must be approached from at least two levels: (a) human resources, and (b) financial resources. From the perspective of a teacher education model which places emphasis on entrance requirements, the issue of availability of human resources has been indeed a real one. By defining entrance requirements according to specific criteria, potential trainees with certain characteristics have been denied the opportunity to receive training. Partially as a result of this, the teaching profession is characterized by low levels of employment of personnel from certain ethnic groups (cf. Laosa, 1974). In 1972, the enrollment of this nation's public schools was 44.6 million students. Of these, 2.3 million were Spanish-speaking. While there was one non-minority teacher for every 20 non-minority students and one teacher for every 22.5 American students, there was one Spanish-speaking teacher for every 107 Spanish-speaking students in the U.S. (Ethridge, 1973). Of course, it is difficult to separate out the factors which account for the lack of adequate representation of various minority groups in teacher education. One suspects that the truly important factors are wider societal ones, and that the more specific ones such as potential bias in entrance requirements are reflections of the society in which they occur.

It could be assumed, following a rational analysis, that part of the problems that minority children have with traditional educational institutions stems from the fact that they are taught by individuals from a different ethnic group, namely the dominant WASP. A person from the same cultural-linguistic background as the pupul, it could be argued (and I myself have sustained a similar point of view in at least one paper in the past), will have a better understanding of that child's motivational and learning styles and other unique culturally-related characteristics, and thus be in a better position to maximize his/her learning potential. If this were the case, one could conclude that an increase in the number of teachers from Spanish-speaking backgrounds would solve the educational problems of children from this minority group. Following such a conclusion one would specify a priorily, as a multicultural teacher competency, membership in the pupil's cultural-linguistic group.

Recent empirical evidence suggests that mere membership in a particular cultural-linguistic group does not insure superior teaching ability with pupils from the same cultural-linguistic group. While a recent investigation (U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1973) revealed that teachers in the schools of Southwestern U.S. are failing to involve Mexican American children as active participants in the

classroom to the same extent as Anglo children, a closer scrutiny of the findings of this research study further reveals that Mexican American teachers praised and encouraged Anglo pupils to a strikingly greater degree than their Anglo colleagues did, and conversely, Mexican American pupils somewhat less than Anglo teachers did.

Thus, it seems clear that similar teacher-pupil ethnic group membership is no assurance of multicultural teaching competence. That this is indeed the case could have been determined only through empirical evidence; an erroneous conclusion could have easily been maintained had one relied exclusively on rational analysis.

The issue of availability of financial resources for multicultural education is indeed a real one; however, since it is predicated mostly upon political factors, the present paper will not address it. Very much related to the issue of availability of financial resources, of course, is the issue of degree of societal commitment to cultural pluralism.

To what extent is multicultural education a potentially positive activity toward the liberation of heretofore oppressed minorities? To the extent that multicultural education is based on the premise of accepting and encouraging cultural-linguistic variability, it should serve as an instrument of liberation for oppressed minorities. The concept of cultural variability in education, however, must

go considerably deeper than most current attempts in this regard, which focus merely on the more superficial aspects of culture. It is important to realize that in addition to the more salient manifestations of the different subcultures, such as styles of dress, customs, language, moral codes, skin pigmentation, etc., are more fundamental and perhaps less visible characteristics, or deep "cognitive, perceptual, and personality structures" which justify the differing surface manifestations. Although different subcultures certainly have many things in common, or what are called "universals", they also differ greatly in many respects and often such differences are quite deep, although the determinants of their manifestations may be so subtle that most people never become aware of them (cf. Laosa, 1974; Laosa, Lara-Tapia, & Swartz, 1974). It is probably the case that learner characteristics which are associated with cultural-linguistic group membership interact in some as yet undetermined manner with the characteristics of the teacher. Before we begin to state teacher competencies for multicultural education (or monocultural education, for that matter), we must delineate the individual learner characteristics that are culturally (or otherwise) determined and investigate the nature of the interactions between specific teacher behaviors and pupil characteristics, determining which set of teacher behaviors applied to a

child with specified characteristics produce the desired pupil outcomes.

If institutionalized, would CBTE stifle or rigidify cultural evolution? This sould be a major concern in developing any CBTE model; as Schalock and Hale (1968) have pointed out, given the elements of continuous societal change, teacher education programs must be planned with an eye toward it. Any planning or model-building in CBTE should account not only for elements that are likely to be needed in the future, but also provide the flexibility needed to accomodate the unexpected. An adequate multicultural competency-based teacher education model, then, must be based upon a conceptualization of culture that is not static, but rather continuously evolving.

Is CBTE antithetical to the values of certain cultural-linguistic groups in the U.S.? This may be the case and this issue merits investigation. Some individuals--for example--given a certain set of sociocultural premises, may not find compatible with their relational style the potential emphasis of CBTE on individual study rather than on group instruction. In this sense, certain aspects of CBTE could be conceived as dehumanizing. Whether such incompatibilities surface between a CBTE program and the cultural values of the individual is probably a function of program management rather than of an underlying CBTE philosophy. As such,

it is important that programs be managed with a sensitivity to these issues.

What kinds of pupil outcomes should we strive to develop in children? That is, indeed, a crucial question in the issue of self-determination; it must be approached from several perspectives. In the context of a free democracy, the kinds of learner outcomes to be striven for should be determined by each child's parents. Parental choices will be colored, of course, by values, aspirations, social and economic status, etc. From a perspective that subordinates the individual to the larger society, learner outcomes will be dictated by pressing social needs. So, given certain perceived societal needs learner outcome projections will be directed toward meeting them. A good example of this occurred in this country in the decade following the launching of the Sputnik, when American society saw as necessary for survival in the technological race, to place stronger emphasis in the teaching of math and science.

It may be said that in the U.S. learner outcomes probably have been implicitly determined by a combination of the above plus the influence of tradition and the limits of educational technology. It is obvious, however, that certain cultural groups in this country are having a greater influence in determining which learner outcomes will be striven for than other groups. Thus far one dominant group has

continued to impose its preferred pupil outcomes upon individuals from less powerful groups. Such practice may be labeled enforced assimilation, or attempts at cultural genocide. It is proposed that as a prerequisite for cultural pluralism and multicultural education each cultural group must have equal power to influence the process of determining pupil outcomes. Until this occurs, multicultural education remains in the realm of tokenism and fantasy.

The Need for an Empirical Model

Several rather global competency staements are usually identified on a rational basis as those necessary for multicultural education. These typically include such items as the ability to provide a school environment which reflects local cultural heritages and which is subject to the desires of the local community; ability to involve adults from the community in school-related projects, this having the effect of making the school "their" school; where the local community is interested, offer history and culture content courses that are relevant to the local culture, along with European and American history; to use supplementary materials in the classroom or provide library resources which include items that are oriented to the local culture and language, in order to provide cross-cultural experiences and an atmosphere relevant to the child's heritage; etc.

These certainly are seen as desirable competencies for multicultural education and should be required. In this paper, however, the author takes the position that those kinds of competencies, while certainly necessary, address only the more superficial aspects of the incompatibilities (Cardenas & Cardenas, 1973) that are seen to exist between traditional school characteristics and the characteristics of individual children from minority groups. Not only do such approaches at stating multicultural competencies fail to deal adequately with the underlying problem schools have in meeting the needs of minority children, but also they deal with only one aspect of "culture." As pointed out earlier, there are "deeper" aspects of culture of which the more visible manifestations--what is traditionally called "culture"--are only reflections. Therefore, an adequate competency-based teacher education model must address these competencies. E.g., given the culturally (or otherwise) determined cognitive, perceptual, personality, and linguistic characteristics of a child, what kinds of behaviors on the part of the teacher maximally facilitate the desired learner outcome?

Before one begins to state teacher competencies for multicultural education that have any degree of validity,* several questions must be answered.

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*The term "validity" is employed here in its psychometric sense (cf. Nunnaly, 1967).

(1) Are there configural patterns of pupil characteristics which are culturally determined?

(2) Do such hypothesized inter-learner differences interact differentially with patterns of teacher behaviors in producing pupil outcomes?

(3) Can we identify and predict which teacher behaviors, when applied to an identified set of characteristics in the pupil, will provide a certain pupil outcome?

It is a major thesis of this paper that unless we are able to predict and empirically demonstrate which sets of teacher behaviors, when applied to particular identified configurations of pupil characteristics--personality, cognitive, linguistic, environmental, etc.--produce certain pupil outcomes, competency-based teacher education will remain as an interesting armchair idea.

Previous published research shows that children from various cultural-linguistic groups differ with respect to such important educational variables as preferred learning styles, relational and other personality configurations, perceptual-cognitive patterns, family structure, attitude toward the educational process, sex-role development, linguistic development, etc. (cf. Kagan & Madsen, 1972; Castaneda, Ramirez & Harold, 1972; Lesser, Fifer, & Clark, 1965; Stodolsky & Lesser, 1967; Laosa, Lar[illegible]ia, & Swartz, 1974; Laosa,

Swartz, & Diaz-Guerrero, 1974). These intersubject differences that are associated with cultural background are hypothesized to interact with teacher behaviors, curricula, and other important educational variables. Thus, it is essential to identify the effects of such interactions in determining specific pupil outcomes.

In light of the previous discussion, we may once again ask, What are the important competencies for multicultural education? At best, teacher competencies (a) may be postulated a priorily as hypotheses to be empirically corroborated or discarded; or (b) they can be set dogmatically according to the conventional wisdom. Certainly the model proposed here deems the former alternative (a) as the only appropriate course of action to follow.

The CBTE model proposed here, then, would begin by postulating a set of teacher competencies not as the competencies needed, but rather as hypotheses--the relative usefulness of which is to be tested empirically in specified contexts. As a CBTE program proceeds along the lines of the present model, data are obtained in an ongoing manner at each stage of program implementation; these data, collected and analyzed in an ongoing manner, are then used to modify the original set of specified competencies, articulating in ever further detail the competencies for producing specified pupil outcomes given specific situations, and both learner

and teacher characteristics.

How is one to proceed in choosing a set of competencies as hypotheses? One may begin with higher order abstract categories that may be postulated--because they appear likely to be related to desired outcomes--on the basis of: (1) previous research findings; (2) conventional wisdom; (3) practices which have already shown positive results on the basis of subjective evaluations; (4) existing theories of learning, education, or human development; (5) expressed community needs.

Several levels of criteria may be employed to test teacher competency hypotheses and to generate feedback for modifying and refining the original set of assumptions. Turner (1972) has identified six such levels of criteria. The highest level of criterion, criterion level 1, consists of two parts. First, it calls for the observation of the actual behaviors which the teacher engages in a real classroom situation. Secondly, it includes an analysis of the level of outcomes achieved by the teacher with the pupils she/he teaches. This two-part appraisal of teacher performance is to be conducted over a relatively long period of time--at least two years. By including observational data on teachers as well as pupil performance data, the relationships between the observed behavior of teachers and pupil performances may be analyzed. By taking into account entry

behaviors in the analysis of outcomes, one may separate out effects due to differential gain.

Turner's criterion level 2 is identical to level 1 except that a shorter performance period is involved--one year or less. In criterion level 3 pupil performance data are not employed; judgments about teacher competence are based solely on the observable behaviors of the teachers. The validity of this criterion level is, of course, totally dependent on whether empirical relationships between pupil performance and teacher actions have already been established. Criterion level 4 differs from level 3 in that both the context and the range of teaching behaviors are restricted. Micro-teaching situations involving a few students or even peers acting as students would fall in this category. In criterion level 5, the teacher need not perform before a live pupil audience since simulated pupils may be employed. In creterion level 6, the teacher need not even engage in producing a performance, but rather only show that she/he understands some behavior, concept, or principle related to teaching. The same comment made on the relative validity of criterion level 3 is applicable to levels 4, 5, and 6.

In the context of the CBTE model presented in the present paper, of Turner's criterion levels, only 1 and 2 are seen as adequate, until sufficient data becomes available which allow reliable predictions of pupil outcomes from

particular teacher behaviors. It is obvious that proceeding to develop and implement a CBTE program without empirical data on the relationships between specified teacher behaviors and pupil outcomes, would represent an exercise in futility. Once data become available on the relationships between certain teacher acts and pupil outcomes, one may adopt Turner's levels 3, 4, or 5 for those behaviors.

As proposed in the present model, however, to begin development of an adequate CBTE program one must go beyond Turner's criterion level 1. It is postulated that intervening variables may influence the relationship between a specified teacher behavior and a pupil outcome. Thus, teacher X may produce the same behaviors as teacher Y, with different pupil outcomes resulting; depending on such types of mediating variables as personality of the teacher, pupil characteristics, situational variables etc. Concern here is, of course, with the generalizability of "teacher behavior-pupil outcome" relationships. Therefore, one must investigate not only observed teacher behavior and resulting pupil outcomes, but also how a multitude of other variables--teacher, pupil, context--affect such relationships.

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